

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-05

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6916

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL KADUNA

AMCONSUL IBADAN

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BRUSSELS FOR USEC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, NI

SUBJECT: LABOR UNITY: ULC PRESIDENT REJECTS IDEA

REF: LAGOS 10350 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: LABOR UNITY TALKS CONTINUE WITHOUT MAJOR PROBLEMS  
ALTHOUGH ULC PRESIDENT KALTUNGO, IN PRESS STATEMENT, REJECTED  
MERGER. REACTION FROM ULC OFFICIALS HAS BEEN SHARPLY CRITICAL  
OF KALTUNGO, WITH SOME SPECULATION HE IS ATTEMPTING OBTAIN  
ICFTU ASSISTANCE IN SABOTAGING MERGER MOVE. END SUMMARY

1. UNITED LABOUR CONGRESS (ULC) PRESIDENT ALHAJI YINUSA  
KALTUNGO, IN EXCLUSIVE PRESS INTERVIEW NOVEMBER 16, REJECTED  
ANY POSSIBILITY OF HIS PARTICIPATING IN ON-GOING LABOR MERGER  
DISCUSSIONS. HE CLAIMED HE HAS NEVER BEEN CONSULTED ON MERGER,  
HAS NOT ATTENDED ANY MEETINGS OF STEERING COMMITTEE AND  
IS READY TO FIGHT CONCEPT OF MERGING CENTRAL LABOR ORGANIZATIONS.

2. STATEMENT HAS CAUSED CONSIDERABLE FUROR AMONG UNION  
OFFICIALS FROM ALL CENTRAL LABOR BODIES, AND NUMBER OF TOP  
UNION LEADERS, INCLUDING ULC OFFICIALS, HAVE DONDEMNED KALTUNGO.

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THOSE CLOSELY INVOLVED IN MERGER TALKS NOTE THEY HAVE PRIVATE

AGREEMENT NOT TO DISCUSS NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRESS, AND KALTUNGO HAS IGNORED THIS AGREEMENT. MOST TOP ULC LEADERS REJECT KALTUNGO'S LINE AND STATE THEY WILL SET HIM RIGHT IN NEXT ULC EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING. THEY CLAIM (A) HE HAS BEEN KEPT FULLY INFORMED OF NEGOTIATIONS; (B) ULC WILL NOT BACK OUT OF TALKS; AND (C) ANY ULC LEADER WHO ATTEMPTS TO SABOTAGE TALKS WILL FIND HIMSELF ISOLATED.

3. SPECULATION AS TO POSSIBLE MOTIVES BEHIND KALTUNGO'S STATEMENT PROCEEDING ALONG THREE LINES: (A) THAT IS ACTING ON BEHALF OF SOME UNKNOWN FMG OFFICIAL IN EFFORT BY FMG TO BREAK-UP MERGER DISCUSSIONS; (B) THAT HE IS UPSET OVER FAILURE OF MERGER INITIATORS TO GIVE DEFERENCE TO HIS POSITION AS LEADER OF NATION'S LARGEST CENTRAL LABOR BODY BY NOT ASKING HIM TO HEAD STEERING COMMITTEE; AND (C) THAT KALTUNGO WAS SPEAKING SOLELY FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION TIED TO HIS REPORTED (BUT STILL UNCONFIRMED) DEPARTURE NOVEMBER 16 FOR BRUSSELS TO ATTEND ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING. ON LAST HYPOTHESIS, CURRENT RUMOR IS THAT POSSIBLE KALTUNGO TRIP TO BRUSSELS WAS FOR PURPOSE OF ENABLING HIM TO MAKE PLEA FOR ICFTU FUNDS TO BLOCK MERGER, BASED ON ARGUMENT THAT NEW CENTRAL LABOR BODY WOULD BE NON-ALIGNED AND WOULD CUT ICFTU TIES WITH NIGERIAN LABOR MOVEMENT.

4. MEANWHILE MERGER TALKS PROCEEDING SMOOTHLY. LAST MEETING OF STEERING COMMITTEE ON NOVEMBER 15 SAW INTRODUCTION OF DRAFT CONSTITUTION. NUMBER OF CHANGES WERE RECOMMENDED BY ULC DELEGATES AND ACCEPTED BY OTHERS, AN INDICATION THAT OTHER GROUPS ARE WILLING TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO KEEP MODERATE ULC INVOLVED IN TALKS. NEW DRAFT TO BE CONSIDERED DECEMBER 6.

5. COMMENT: FEELINGS RUNNING HIGH AMONG GROWING NUMBER OF UNION LEADERS THAT MERGER IS INEVITABLE AND THAT OLDER UNION LEADERS STILL TIED TO "COLD WAR" MANY FIND THEMSELVES OUTSIDE MAIN STREAM OF LABOR MOVEMENT. SOME THOUGHT APPARENTLY BEING GIVEN TO POSSIBILITY OF EVEN IGNORING TOP LEADERS OF PRESENT CENTRAL LABOR GROUPS WHEN LEADERS OF NEW ORGANIZATION ARE CHOSEN. KALTUNGO'S STATEMENT IS UNLIKELY TO PRESENT ANY REAL PROBLEM TO MERGER, OTHER THAN EMBARRASSING ULC OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN TALKS AND REDUCING KALTUNGO'S CHANCES OF GAINING LEADERSHIP ROLE IN NEW BODY.

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## Message Attributes

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